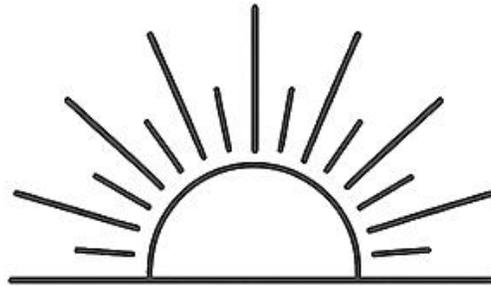


MIDSUMMER
WITH
MATTHEW



SUMMER 2025

WEEK 13

August 17 – August 23

Matthew 25:13 – Matthew 26:75

#85
Sunday, August 17, 2025
Matthew 25:13-30

Wait for Me!

You could think of that as the theme of today's verses, Matthew 25:13-30. Rather than have me tell you everything in them, it would be better for you to read them yourself. God promises to bless His Word.

I'm Tony Pittenger, pastor at Bethany Lutheran Church in Port Orchard, WA and I pray you take those first three words into today's reading...

"Wait for Me," says Jesus. "I will come and find you."

Jesus said the words of today's reading, a parable, during the same week that He instituted the Sacrament of Holy Communion, the same week He let Himself be captured and condemned. The same week that He took all your sins—yes, the sin of all the world, but your sins too—and He paid for them with His own suffering and death.

It's that week—the week of all weeks for a sinful world—that week during which He said, "Wait for Me. I will come and find you."

Now, when you read these verses will they contain warning? Absolutely. God-forbid that when Jesus returns for us and we're not waiting for Him! Like those five ladies in yesterday's reading who let their oil run out and were just sleeping the darkness away.

So yes, today's verses contain a passionate warning for all people for whom Jesus dies. Impassioned words because after all Jesus was about to do for us it would be absolutely terrible if we were like those five foolish bridesmaids and were sleeping soundly in our own darkness.

"No! No way! Let it never be!" says Jesus.

He's going to get everything ready for us to be in Heaven with Him, clear every obstacle, pay every outstanding bill so that we can be alive and healthy with all this world's tears dried.

Wait for Me. I will come, no matter where you are, I will come and look for you."

#86

Monday, August 18, 2025

Matthew25:31-46

Sunset down here is like nothing I've ever seen. This is AJ Hamilton from Redeemer Lutheran Church in Scottsdale Arizona. They say that Arizona has some of the most beautiful sunsets you'll see anywhere. As the sun goes down in the West, the sky turns these amazing colors of orange and gold, pink and red—the end of the day there's glory that comes into view. It was there the whole time, so to speak, but it was hidden. Finally it comes out.

When the Son of Man comes at the Last Day, that glory that has always been there—but hidden from sight—will suddenly come into view and the nations will be gathered before Him. This is a courtroom scene. But it's not like any other one you've ever seen. You see, usually, they gather the evidence and present it in order to arrive at a verdict. But Christ's Kingdom is not of this world. Christ's Kingdom is a kingdom of grace. In this kingdom the verdict comes first.

You are washed in it from your Baptism. You hear it ahead of time in the Gospel that's been preached to you. You eat and drink it in Holy Communion, at the Table where you know Christ and Christ knows you. That's the beginning of a whole new life for you that brings out evidence that you are justified, declared not guilty, in God's court of Justice and Mercy for Jesus sake. Then you start living, quite to the surprise of your own self.

As you read your lesson in Matthew today—Matthew25.31-46, listen for the words that show you your salvation by God's grace only: Come; blessed by my Father; for your inheritance, prepared for you from the foundation of the world. One day soon, you'll see it. God bless you in that day and every day till then.

#87

Tuesday, August 19, 2025

Matthew 26:1-5

Hi everyone! My name is Jack Pittenger, and I am back in New Ulm, Minnesota, where in six days, I will start my Junior year at Martin Luther College. In six days, I'm also starting classes that will give me a certification to serve as a chaplain.

Part of a chaplain's job if they serve in a fire department is offering defusings and debriefings to the firemen. These firemen respond to awful calls every day. They see people at their worst, and they take all the grief and horror upon their own shoulders.

The chaplain exists to alleviate some of that weight. This is a very common thing among those who deal with mental health. Therapists often have their own therapists to be able to talk through all of the junk and sin that they hear about daily.

In our bible verse today, we read about something similar. Today, August 19th, we read the words of Matthew 26:1-5. Here we see Jesus turning to his closest friends, the twelve who followed him everywhere, the ones who knew him better than anyone. He turned to them and found no comfort. None of his burden was lifted; after all, it was the disciples' sin that was going to condemn Jesus in just two days. Now, in these 5 verses, we don't read anything about the disciples' response, but, thinking back to about a month ago, you should have read another account of Jesus predicting his death in Matthew 16. Here, we did see the disciples' response; Peter rebuked Jesus, saying that Jesus would never die.

As Jesus predicts his death again, he is just two days from the events of his passion—his betrayal, unjust trial, suffering, and death. As we continue to read through those events, pay attention to the disciples' reactions, their attitude. It is clear that they still do not understand God's plan for Salvation. Here, we have a privilege that even the Son of God did not have. We have someone to turn to. Our closest friend, the one who is with us everywhere. The one who knows us better than anyone else. We can turn to Jesus for comfort and find our burdens lifted high upon the cross. He understands.

I want to leave you with the words of a hymn. What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear! What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer! O what peace we often forfeit; O what needless pain we bear—all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer. So, brothers and sisters, take advantage of that privilege, take it all to the Lord in prayer, because that same Lord Jesus knows your every weakness, and he has promised to give you eternal rest.

#88

Wednesday, August 20, 2025

Matthew 26:6-16

Hello, I'm Pastor Jerry Gernander of Hope Lutheran Church in Leander, Texas. This short video is to prepare us to read Matthew 26:6-16.

We're right at the beginning of Jesus' Passion in this reading. Yesterday we heard that the Jewish leaders were at this time plotting to kill Jesus.

Our reading shifts to a quiet scene where Jesus is enjoying an evening with friends. This scene is focused on two people: first, Mary the sister of Martha; and secondly, Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus' disciples.

It's a big contrast between Mary and Judas. Mary does something good out of great love for Jesus. We'll hear that "His disciples" were upset by the cost of the gift she gives to Jesus, and they say, "Why this waste?" and tear her down – but Jesus defends her. We know from John's gospel, it was Judas who said this. Then it gets worse. We hear, sadly, that Judas does the worst thing he can: he goes to the chief priests offering to betray Jesus to them in exchange for money.

When we hear the history of Jesus' Passion, it's easy to get wrapped up in the emotion of the events. But Martin Luther said that we shouldn't do that. He said the wrong way to meditate on Jesus' Passion is to get angry at Judas – and feeling sorry for Jesus also isn't the way.

Judas represents us. The ugliness of sin in his heart, we have it too. Mary represents us. The love that results from faith, God puts it in our heart too. We are at the same time sinners and saints. Sinners through our own fault, and saints – holy – by the gift of God, the forgiveness and faith He gives.

Remember this too: as Jesus defended Mary, He defends you. By His cross and resurrection. Peace!

#89

Thursday, August 21, 2025

Matthew 26:17-29

So we come to one of the most quoted sections of Scripture in our worship services, Matthew 26:17-29. The second part is what's quoted so often because the second part specifically gets quoted when we institute the Lord's Supper and we practice the Lord's Supper regularly, when we partake in it.

So this is a regular part of our services. You likely, if you have been in the Lutheran church for a while, are very familiar with these words. So what kind of introduction should I share to such a familiar section? Well, I wanted to share something that was kind of a new or different thought for me.

A couple years ago when I was preaching on this section, I started to wonder, when Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper here, he's at the Passover meal. We think about Jesus as the Passover Lamb, but when Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper, he uses the wine and then he uses bread.

He could have used the lamb. I mean, he is the Passover lamb, right? Why did he use the bread? Now, whenever we ask a question like this, we need to be careful to not say for sure we know the why, because God does things and he doesn't always tell us the why. But as I was pondering it, one of the things that we find in Scripture, especially throughout the Old Testament, is that the bread, bread is always a reminder of how God gives life. Even in the New Testament, in the Lord's Prayer... "Give us this day our daily bread." It's this provision. It's this giving of new life.

This made me wonder, maybe that's part of why. I mean contextually for when Jesus institutes this with the Passover, that would make sense because the Passover was really a deliverance from slavery so that God's people could go out and really live and be his people.

Jesus, through his death and his resurrection, he frees us from slavery to our sin, our guilt, our shame, to the powers of evil in this world, to death itself. Jesus, through his death and resurrection, sets us free to really live. When we take part in the Lord's Supper, when we take that bread and the wine, we are also taking with it the body and blood of Christ. We are that connected to God. We are that connected to Christ. We have his life in us. We have been given complete, new life that lasts on into eternity.

So when I think about the bread, maybe that's why. Again, I don't want to say for sure that's the why, but I do know that we are actually connected to God himself, the author and giver of life. Here we are when we take that Lord's supper, embracing the forgiveness of our sins, deliverance from sin, death and everything that goes along with it. Then if we're delivered from that, what do we have? This whole new life with God.

In this section too, we also have that sad reality of Judas' betrayal. Yet within that sad scene here, God gives this beautiful new sacrament for us to partake in... the Lord's Supper. In the

midst of our broken, sinful world today, we can come to our Lord and we can take that bread and wine, connect with Christ himself, his body and his blood. We get to receive and again, walk in that strength of that new life that he's given us.

#90
Friday, August 22, 2025
Matthew 26:30-56

I'm Pastor Tony Pittenger, from Bethany Lutheran in Port Orchard, WA. and we have some heavy material in the verses before us today, in Matthew 26:30-56.

Let me help you...

First, note that Jesus is true God. See that in His "omniscience," in how He knows all things, things that haven't yet happened but which will happen.

And make note of what He knows. He knows that His own disciples will fall away. He knows that one will choose money instead of faithfulness. He knows that Peter will be so frightened that Peter will deny being connected to Jesus.

That means Jesus knows your sin. He knows how you've been unfaithful to Him, how you've fled from His presence, how you've chosen money and other things—other worldly pleasures—over Him.

So if that makes you feel bad, makes you realize you're as guilty as—and no better than—Peter and Judas—then while that's not a fun thing it isn't a bad thing.

Knowing your own sin and your own guilt, pay careful attention to Jesus' prayer in today's reading. He asks that "the cup" pass from Him, that some other way be found, but He submits to the Father's will.

He submits to God's plan that He pay for your sin, that He be punished instead of you, that He suffer and die, so that you need not pay for your own sins, be punished for them by God, so that even when you die your death will be emptied—completely emptied—of God's wrath.

When that day and that hour comes for you, you will close your eyes and your soul will rest safe in God the Father's care.

Your sin won't be an obstacle, a barrier, an impediment. It absolutely will not be because of what you find Jesus preparing to do in today's verses, in Matthew 24:30-56.

God bless you as you read these words of His!

#91

Saturday, August 23, 2025

Matthew 26:57-75

Seven years ago, Melissa and I were blessed to visit her sister and sister's family as the U.S. Army had them stationed in Europe.

One of the most memorable things we saw, one of the most memorable things I've personally ever seen, were the beaches and cemeteries of D-Day.

Omaha Beach is the largest. We happened to arrive at low tide just as the men of the First Infantry Division did on the morning of June 6, 1944. To walk that same sand where such a high price for my freedom was paid. To stroll through the hundreds and hundreds of rows of gravestones...

Both of Melissa's grandfathers served in World War II, one of mine did, giving his life over there when Grandma was still pregnant with Dad.

That solemnity, that stillness is, personally, how the verses of today's reading, Matthew 26:57-75 feel. I doubt I'll ever actually walk through the courtyard where Peter warmed himself by a fire, I doubt I'll ever be able to stand in the actual courtroom where people lied about Him, where the bailiffs struck Him, but reading through these verses sort of takes me there.

They sort of "unfold" that night before my eyes.

Friends, this is what Matthew is all about, what the past 90 days of reading have been about. They've been leading us to these places we will be for the next week so that Matthew himself can show us and so that we ourselves can see that we do indeed have a Savior from all our sin.

Here are words and here are places memorable, not just for your whole life, but for the life to come as well.

Open your Bible. Read these words. See what God has done for you!